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25 August 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: PRM-29 Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

1. The PRM-29 Ad Hoc Committee (on security classification) met on 24 August 1977 to review the President's decisions on PRM-29 topics and to discuss how best to deal with a new issue raised by the President. Bob Gates, NSC Staff, and Rick Neustadt, Domestic Council, chaired the meeting.

2. Mr. Gates summarized the President's actions as follows:

a. All SCC recommendations were approved (e.g., routine classifications to have six year maximum duration; Top Secret classifiers permitted to extend classifications to 20 years; willful abusers of the system subject to administrative sanctions; compartments permitted subject to criteria, high-level approval and review at three year intervals; paragraph classification mandatory; classification subject to meeting criteria for subject and functional areas, and to a damage test; public interest in access to be weighed against need to safeguard information; declassification reviews to result in declassification of information unless disclosure shown to be demonstrably harmful; information provided in confidence by both foreign governments and unofficial foreign sources [latter a new concept favored by State] to be classified).

b. Foreign originated classified material to be protected for 30 years, vice the 20 for all U.S. originated material (it would then be subject to review to determine further protective requirements).

c. Secrecy agreements for access to classified information to be optional with departments and agencies. The new Security Oversight Office to develop a uniform agreement for optional use.

d. The final draft of the new Executive Order to be circulated to departments and agencies for comment also to be made available to the public (e.g., interested Congressional committees, the classification management society, anyone who asks for a copy).

e. The new Security Oversight Office to be in GSA, but to have significant authority.

f. The President stated his personal concern about lack of constraints on duplication of very sensitive documents, and asked that the Committee devise a means to bring this problem under better control.

3. Mr. Gates distributed for discussion copies of wording he had drafted for the new Order to reflect the President's decision on the Oversight Office, and to try to resolve the document duplication problem. Messrs. Gates and Neustadt said that they thought the President would be open to arguments from department heads who believed that the Oversight Office would not be able to do its job effectively if located in GSA. It was noted that the President's recent actions to reduce the size of the Executive Office of the President may have been a factor in his decision in this case. Extended discussion of Mr. Gates' proposal on document duplication control showed a clear consensus against including in the Order any complex procedures for special caveats. It was finally agreed that the drafting group for the Order would prepare language on this topic, with copies thereof to be provided to Ad Hoc Committee members as soon as possible for their approval.

4. Mr. Gates asked the drafting committee (myself, and representatives from Defense, State, OMB, and ICRC) to meet with him and Mr. Neustadt on 25 August 1977 to work out final details for the draft Order.

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DCI Security Committee

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